

# The SEED School of Maryland: Annual Report

Education Article § 8-701, MSAR 5869

**Division of Student Support, Academic  
Enrichment, and Educational Policy**

December 2023 Legislative Report



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# Overview

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Education Article §8-701 established the Residential Boarding Education Program for At-Risk Youth. The operator of the Maryland Residential Boarding Program for At-Risk Youth is the SEED School of Maryland. The SEED School is designed to provide a rigorous college preparatory education. The preliminary enrollment count for the 2023-2024 school year is 404 students enrolled in grades six to 12 from 13 local education agencies (LEAs).

The SEED School has been in operation since fall 2008. In July 2023, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved a contract renewal for the SEED School for a five-year term through July 2028. In the renewed contract, updates were made to reporting requirements and to academic and operational benchmarks.

Education Article §8-708 directs the Board of Trustees of the designated operator of the Maryland Residential Boarding Education Program for At-Risk Youth to report to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) detailed information on the number, grades, and jurisdictions of students enrolled in the program in the current and preceding years. On or before December 1st of each year, MSDE is required to report this information to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly, along with a recommendation regarding whether funds for the residential education program should be increased or decreased. This report does not include student names, so the report may be made available to the public.

The following information is included in this report: (1) projected student enrollment summary by grade and sending LEA for the 2023-2024 school year for all 404 students in grades 6-12; (2) student enrollment summary by grade and sending LEA for the 402 students in grades 6-12 who attended the SEED School for the 2022-2023 school year; (3) actual expenditures for fiscal year (FY) 2023 and the projected budget for FY 2024; and (4) whether funds appropriated under §8-708 should be increased or decreased. As per §8-702, the program is operated under the supervision of MSDE. Ms. Carol Beck, Director, Office of School Innovations is the contract monitor and meets at least monthly with the SEED School leadership team to review student progress, address program concerns, and identify areas where MSDE can provide technical assistance to the school. Ms. Beck also facilitates informal meetings, structured visits, and contact with others in the Department, as appropriate. Ms. Beck is supported by key MSDE staff including Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy, Walter Sallee, Director of Student Services and Strategic Planning, and Michelle Culmore, Specialist, in the Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy. The MSDE staff facilitates communications between SEED School staff, local Directors of Student Support, and other LEA staff members.

## School Administration

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Kirk Sykes is the Head of the SEED School of Maryland and begins his fourth year leading the school. Mr. Sykes brings over 20 years of experience in educational leadership to SEED.

Throughout his career, he has worked to balance tradition and innovation to benefit students and their families. He holds a B.A. from Morgan State University, an M. Ed. in Education from Coppin State University, and is completing doctoral studies at Seton Hall University.

Staff at the SEED School with leadership roles in reading, mathematics, library/media, science, social studies, physical education, Title I, and special education receive content-related information from MSDE. SEED School staff members are also invited to attend training sponsored by MSDE when the content is relevant. This includes professional development provided by the Division of Special Education, the Division of Accountability and Assessment, and the Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy.

## Enrollment

As specified by legislation, the September 30th enrollment is the official count used to determine billing for enrollment for each LEA.

Table 1 includes the number of students by grade and LEA for the 2023-2024 school year. The preliminary enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year is pending based on verification of the official September 30 enrollment count. Table 2 includes the number of students by grade and LEA for the 2022-2023 school year. In the 2022-2023 school year, students represented 13 counties and Baltimore City. In the 2023-2024 school year, the preliminary enrollment includes students from 11 counties and Baltimore City.

**TABLE 1. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE AND LEA PROJECTED FOR 2023-2024**

County	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	Students
Allegany	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Anne Arundel	3	4	0	4	2	1	5	19
Baltimore City	27	19	12	44	47	19	21	189
Baltimore Co.	6	13	12	17	15	9	9	81
Cecil	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Charles	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5
Frederick	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Harford	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	5
Howard	5	1	2	1	1	1	2	13
Montgomery	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	5
Prince George's	13	11	9	14	12	12	5	76
Wicomico	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>404</b>

**TABLE 2. ENROLLMENT BY GRADE AND LEA FOR 2022–2023**

County	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	N = Enrolled Students
Allegany	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Anne Arundel	3	0	2	3	1	5	0	14
Baltimore City	29	13	18	54	28	23	20	185
Baltimore Co.	15	13	6	21	11	11	13	90
Caroline	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Cecil	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Charles	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Frederick	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Harford	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	5
Howard	1	2	2	0	1	3	3	12
Montgomery	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	6
Prince George's	11	7	9	13	14	8	12	74
Washington	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wicomico	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>402</b>

## Finances

Each year, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly appropriate funding for the SEED School in two parts. An appropriation of state general funds provides funding for the boarding program, administration, and transportation. In addition, there is a special fund appropriation. This amount estimates the contribution that will be made by LEAs, based on enrollment of SEED School students from each County or Baltimore City. MSDE invoices the LEA an amount that equals 85% of the local cost of education times the number of students enrolled.

In FY 2023, the Governor and Maryland General Assembly appropriated from general funds \$12,291,760 to the SEED School and \$12,782,839 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. The Special Fund appropriation was \$5,295,214 in FY 2023. Additional revenue is provided through federal and state grants for which the school is eligible. The SEED School raises private funds to support enhancements to the program. Table 3 reports SEED school expenditures for FY 2023 and the budget for FY 2024. The SEED School reported operating expenditures for FY 2023 of \$18,683,596. The projected operating budget for FY 2024 totals \$20,995,984.

**TABLE 3. SEED SCHOOL OF MARYLAND BUDGET SUMMARY****Revenue:**

Revenue Source	FY 2023 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2024 Projected Approved Budget
State and Local Per Pupil Funding	\$5,295,514	\$5,295,000
State Special Fund for Boarding program	\$11,747,999	\$12,800,000
FARMS (Nat'l Food Program) and State	\$169,308	\$344,500
Federal Grants	\$913,117	\$11,071,283
Special Education	\$0	\$93,650
COVID Relief Fund	\$573,384	\$0
Other State grants	\$349,821	\$0
E rate	\$31,050	\$30,000
Medicare	\$0	\$10,000
Private contributions	\$470,031	\$578,850
Other	\$11,946	\$35,150
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$19,562,170</b>	<b>\$30,258,433</b>

**Expenses:**

Expense	FY 2023 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2024 Projected Approved Budget
Salaries	\$9,376,353	\$10,410,634
Benefits and Taxes	\$1,991,093	\$2,566,420
Other Staff Expense	\$226,540	\$761,200
Occupancy	\$2,014,616	\$2,040,201
Direct Student	\$3,206,060	\$2,711,197
Technology	\$123,401	\$190,000
Development	\$120,051	\$137,500
General and Administrative	\$1,625,482	\$2,178,832
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$18,683,596</b>	<b>\$20,995,984</b>

**Change In Net Assets:**

Summary	FY 2023 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2024 Projected Budget
Revenue Minus Operating Expenses	\$878,574	\$9,262,449
Depreciation and Amortization	-\$1,511,615	-\$1,897,778
Interest Expense	-\$380,576	-\$431,050
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>-\$1,013,617</b>	<b>\$6,933,621</b>
Beginning Net Assets	\$26,257,966	\$25,244,349
Ending Net Assets	\$25,244,349	\$32,177,970

## Summary

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The SEED School of Maryland provides a unique opportunity for Maryland public school students and their families. MSDE provides oversight, support, and guidance to the program through several Divisions.

As noted above, in FY 2020, 2021, and 2022, the special fund appropriation was \$5,295,514. In each of these years, the total amount billed to LEAs was less than the total of the appropriation. Remaining funds revert to the state general fund. In FY 2023, the amount billed to the LEAs totaled \$5,376,148, exceeding the appropriated amount by \$80,634.

Education Article § 8-708 (2) (ii) requires MSDE to determine, “whether the funds appropriated under §8-710 of this subtitle should be increased or decreased.” MSDE recommends that the Special Funds appropriation for the SEED school be increased to \$5,507,080 for FY 2025, to ensure that the appropriation matches the projected amount of revenue from LEAs to MSDE for students enrolled in the SEED School.